

poverty level. As I said before, the arbitrary two-year limit. If after two years a family has only a part-time job, or a low paying job without benefits, cash assistance to these families will continue to boost a family up to 133 percent of the federal poverty level. In Nebraska, we have a lot of \$5 an hour jobs and lower, and a lot of part-time, and they are hired part-time and temporary on purpose so they don't have to have any benefits. They don't get any health care, nothing like that. The reason...so the 133 percent is really the working poor number. This level is commonly accepted for a lot of other benefits and for criteria for things that people get. For instance, if a woman and one child is, at the end of the two-year assistance and she's working for...in some job that's paying her maybe \$5, \$6 an hour, she's within the grasp of self-sufficiency but hasn't quite gotten there. This amendment would...the bill as it stands now would take away all her cash assistance at a point when she and her family are just emerging and they're doing what we've asked them to do, and then we cut them off. This amendment doesn't drop them at this crucial point but instead the state would make up the difference by providing the appropriate combination of health care and child care and cash assistance to bring us up to 133 percent of the poverty level. This is a level that is commonly accepted as a self-sufficient amount of income. Then as the family wages increase the state's assistance would decrease. So I really think...I brought this back at 133 percent because of the opposition to the 185 percent. I think this is a good amendment. I'll answer...I want to remind you again that the ADC payment itself is only 36 percent of poverty, a long way from the 133 percent. So I think that we need to give them this transitional time so they don't get discouraged and just give up. I mean you think a lot of these people, you think that all these women do is sit around and watch television and not work. That's not so. For most of them they don't, they work, they try to get off of welfare. And so I think this is a way to help these families really make it out and get off of the welfare rolls and be independent. So I hope you'll support this particular amendment. And if you have any questions, I'll try and answer them. Thank you.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator Crosby. Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members. This is a variant of an earlier amendment that was rejected. Senator Crosby, at that time, offered the amendment at 185 percent. We